



Mary Pace, Medical Assistant

I am a Medical Assistant who has multiple roles. One of my roles is work with the dental staff at St. Vincent DePaul and at Greater Waterbury Mental Health Authority. The "Open Arms" program provides the "homeless" population with excellent, free of charge dental service, especially for patients who do have health insurance. I am aware that Medicare does not cover dental services. Community Health Network of Connecticut/SAGA will cover dental services. When patients come into our site, they are screened thoroughly by our Dental Hygienists. In order for all patients to participate in this program; they must have medical clearance first provided by Dawn Pease, APRN. On the day of their appointment, they will be screened by the Dental Hygienists; also there is a health form patients must fill out. This health form will consist of questions regarding their state of medical health as well as their dental and mental health. This form will let the Dental Hygienist know when the last dental screening or dental exam they had was. Most of the "homeless" population does have the knowledge on how to take the first step on taking care of their teeth; sometimes it can be related to their mental health. In some cases patients just do not know how to take care of where to go for help due to their financial status and being "homeless" in which case they do not have an address. Community Health Network of Connecticut/SAGA will provide transportation which started on 2-1-07.

There is a "gentleman" at the Greater Waterbury Mental Health Authority who is our patient. At one time, he felt so bad that he was pulling his own teeth with pliers. He suffers from depression, diabetes and he is missing some teeth. He wishes he had teeth even if they were false. He wants to have a "girlfriend". But, thanks to God; he has been doing well within the past few months. He has lost some weight and he is emotionally better. When he last saw the dental hygienist he felt better because his teeth were cleaned. My heart felt for this "gentleman". Some patients have had accident trauma to their teeth and some just did not know how to practice good hygiene. Therefore they lost their teeth and did not know where to go for help.